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ABSTRACT

Public opinion about public education in Minnesota was investigated through a survey of a representative sample of adults. The questions asked dealt broadly with the following areas: educational quality; teacher employment conditions; State financial support; State educational guidelines; and educational vouchers. Major findings, for the sample as a whole and for various subgroups were as follows: Of the total sample, 79% rated the schools as good or excellent; 69% felt that the schools were as good as or better than they were 10 years ago; and no subgroup fell below majority support for the schools, though support was lower among central city respondents and those with children in private schools. Two subgroups felt that quality was worse than it was 10 years ago--parents with children in private schools and residents of Minneapolis; however, there was general satisfaction with the way the system is run. Only three questions asking about possible changes received endorsement from more than 55% of respondents: (1) 83% favored modifying teacher tenure to make it easier to replace teachers doing unsatisfactory work. No subgroup fell below majority endorsement. (2) 82% would provide more State aid to poorer school districts. No subgroup fell below majority endorsement; and (3) 76% would require that all public schools teach similar classes and use similar materials. Only those with a graduate education fell below majority endorsement. (CMG)

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MINNESOTA CITIZEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS PUBLIC EDUCATION

K-12

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THE FUTURE OF K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA

A project sponsored by Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and the College of Education University of Minnesota

MINNESOTA CITIZEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS PUBLIC EDUCATION

by

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FOREWORD

This report grows out of the Project on the Future of K-12 Public Education in Minnesota sponsored jointly by CURA and the College of Education at the University of Minnesota. The project, begun in the summer of 1983, has been designed to develop an accurate and comprehensive assessment of K-12 public education in Minnesota, to examine the debate surrounding public education, especially its applicability to Minnesota, and to analyze the various reform proposals as they might apply to Minnesota.

The central component of the project is the University of Minnesota Panel on the Future of Public Education in Minnesota, comprised of faculty members from various disciplines throughout the University with expertise and interest in public education. This faculty panel has guided the development of the project and reviewed its reports and publications.

This report summarizes and analyzes the results of a statewide survey of public opinion conducted in spring 1984, based on a representative sample of Minnesota adults. The survey was conducted by the Minnesota Center for Social Research at the University of Minnesota. This report is the second of several growing out of the joint CURA/College of Education project. The first report, The Berman, Weiler Study of Minnesota Student Performance: A Critical Review, was published by CURA in the fall of 1984.

INTRODUCTION

The three most important issues facing people in Minnesota are taxes, unemployment, and education. That is one of the facts uncovered by a mid-1984 survey of 2,003 adults in the state. Given this, it is appropriate to probe the education issue deeper, asking citizens to evaluate the current state of public education, appraise current public policies, and react to various proposed alternative policies. Such questions were asked on that same mid-1984 survey in work supported by CURA and Public School Incentives, a nonprofit corporation. This report presents those survey results along with an initial analysis identifying the subsets of the state's population whose opinions vary significantly from the population as a whole.

The education questions were part of a larger telephone survey conducted in late spring of 1984 by the University of Minnesota's Minnesota Center for Social Research. Areas of the state were delineated and samples, proportional in size to census population counts, were obtained through random digit dialing. After the question on important issues facing Minnesota (question A2), fourteen different education questions were asked on the survey; they are numbered B1 through B12 (no B11) and C1 through C3.

The body of this report presents a section for each question, giving the question verbatim, showing the distribution of responses, and outlining the kinds of divergent opinions found in various subgroups of the population. Twelve major variables (demographic stratifications of the population) were examined: age, income, education, religion, occupation, sex, household composition, children in school, Twin Cities as a special entity, region of the state, school district size, and size of the school district's high school graduating class.

Appendix A gives further detail on these twelve variables and also uses the most recent census data (1980) to document how representative the survey sample was of the state's population as a whole. On a number of measures, including geographic distribution, occupation, and sex, the sample was very close to the state's total population. On others, the sample proved to be slightly different, for example, slightly older, better educated, and of higher income than the state as a whole. At least the last difference can be explained, in part, by the four years of high inflation intervening between the time of the 1980 census and the date of this survey.

Appendix B presents the results of using a statistical measure, chi-squared, to test each of the twelve variables for differences in the responses of their subgroups as compared to the overall response to each question. For readers not interested in this level of statistical detail, an asterisk (*) has been placed in the main body of the report

next to statements about the variables in which the responses show a pattern or differ in some important way from the overall responses.

A broad summary of all questions and relations is presented next in an attempt to synthesize all these details and give a general flavor of Minnesotans' attitudes toward this important issue of public education.

SUMMARY

Minnesotans rate their public schools quite highly (24 percent excellent + 55 percent good = 79 percent, see question B1). They feel that the quality is the same or better (26 percent + 43 percent = 69 percent) than it was ten years ago (question B2). No subgroup falls below majority support for the public schools; although support is lower among central city respondents and those with children in private schools. On the issue of changing quality, only two subgroups of the population did not feel quality was the same or better now than ten years ago: parents with children in private schools (40 percent same or better) and residents of Minneapolis (46 percent same or better).

Coupled with this high level of satisfaction is a general satisfaction with the way the system is currently run. Only three questions asking about possible changes received endorsement from more than 55 percent of the respondents.

1) Eighty-three percent favor modifying teacher tenure to make it easier to replace teachers doing unsatisfactory work (question B3). No subgroup of the population fell below majority endorsement.
2) Eighty-two percent would provide more state aid to school districts with less ability to fund their own educational programs (question B7). No subgroup of the population fell below majority endorsement.
3) Seventy-six percent would require that all public schools in Minnesota teach similar classes and use similar materials (question B9). Only those with a graduate education fall below majority endorsement--to 44 percent.

The questions about evaluating current policy and reacting to proposed changes can be grouped into four classes: those dealing with employment conditions, those about state financial support to local school districts, those about the state establishing educational guidelines for the local districts, and those about the potential use of vouchers. These classes will be used to summarize results.

TEACHER EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS (questions B3, B4, and B5)

Three questions asked about changing the conditions of employment for teachers. The first, modifying the tenure code to replace those doing unsatisfactory work, was overwhelmingly supported, as reported above (83 percent). However, removing seniority as a criterion in layoffs was rejected (56 percent). A question about significantly increasing teacher salaries received an even response from supporters (49 percent) and opponents (51 percent).

People in different situations varied in their responses to these questions. Regarding the issue of replacing teachers doing unsatisfactory work, no subgroup showed

less than 70 percent approval; lowest approval rates were from those earning $40,000-$50,000 (75 percent approval), those with graduate degrees (70 percent approval), and those living in Minneapolis and St. Paul (78 percent approval).

On the issue of eliminating seniority in hiring and layoff decisions, more support came from those least likely to be union members themselves: that is, those with high income, those in farm/forest and manager/professional occupations, the better educated, and those not living in the metropolitan area or northeastern Minnesota. However, of all the many subclasses, a majority of only two groups favored this proposal, both rural--those in farm/forest occupations (53 percent approval), and those in school districts with fewer than 500 students (51 percent approval).

Finally, those most favoring a significant raising of teacher salaries are those who most value education or who live in areas with a higher cost of living. In the first group are those mentioning education as an important issue facing the state, those with more education, those with a higher income, and those working in manager/professional jobs. Younger people and singles (with or without children) also favor salary increases. In the latter group are those in the Twin Cities. Farmers were strongly opposed.

STATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT (questions B6, B7, B10, and B12)

The state currently pays about 40 percent of the cost of funding local education, though this figure has been dropping in recent years. Citizens would like that percentage to return to higher levels (54 percent disagree with this recent downward shift). They do not want the state to pay the whole bill (66 percent said no). As indicated above, an overwhelming majority (82 percent) would like the state to provide more assistance to the local districts that have less ability to pay for their own educational programs.* Finally, most Minnesotan's agree (13 percent strongly agree, 50 percent agree) that giving some support to private schools, through tax writeoffs and other programs, is an appropriate public policy. It is worth noting that Minnesotans who felt taxes were an important issue facing the state did not respond differently to any of these questions.

Different subgroups of the population responded differently to these questions. On the issue of shifting school funding from state (income and sales) tax revenues to the local property tax, those in the higher socio-economic classes (higher income and education, manager/professional jobs) tended to have higher agreement with this shift than others in the survey population, but no one subgroup had an agreement percentage above 58 percent. Northeastern Minnesota was very much opposed: only 39 percent approved.

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*It is worth noting that the current state school aid formula already provides some additional payment to such districts.

Two-thirds of Minnesotans were opposed to full state support of public education; furthermore, the majority of no subgroup favored this proposal. The deepest opposition came from those in higher socio-economic classes and from the northwestern and southwestern parts of the state.

Every subgroup favored providing more state aid to districts with less ability to fund their own educational programs. Only those in farm/forest occupations (65 percent approval) had an approval rating below 70 percent.

The majority of every subgroup also agreed with the current policy of providing state aid to private schools. Catholics (76 percent) and those with children in private school (93 percent) most favor this policy. More so than other subgroups, those in higher socio-economic classes (higher income, more education, and manager/professional occupations) tended to polarize, with disproportionate percentages giving answers of strongly agree and strongly disagree.

STATE EDUCATIONAL GUIDELINES (questions B8 and B9)

People are willing to let the state set minimum educational requirements for Minnesota school districts, but are less inclined to let the state set upper limits on educational options. As indicated above, 76 percent would favor the state requiring all public schools to teach similar classes and use similar materials. Fifty-four percent would favor a state policy restricting the spending of wealthier districts.

People in different situations responded differently to these questions. The requirement that all public schools teach similar classes and use similar material was favored by every subgroup except those with a college degree or higher. Lowest approval for such a policy was found among those in higher socio-economic classes (higher income and education, manager/professional occupations).

More disagreement was found on the issue of restricting the spending of wealthier districts. Subgroups opposed to this policy include those with children, higher socio-economic groups, those living in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and in larger school districts, and men.

VOUCHERS (questions C1, C2, and C3)*

Under a voucher system state aid for education is tied to the child and is paid to the school selected by the parents for educating their child. Minnesotans have not made up

*These questions were written and sponsored by Public School Incentives.

their minds about educational vouchers. When asked whether they favored, opposed, or had no opinion about three different forms of voucher systems, a significantly large proportion of people had no opinion (20 to 37 percent) so that none of the voucher systems was affirmed or refuted by a majority. Just over one-third (35 percent) favored a general voucher system compared to 29 percent opposition. A like number (35 percent) favored a system restricting the use of vouchers to public schools, compared to 45 percent opposition. Slightly more (38 percent) favored a system which would restrict allocation of vouchers to low income parents where they would not be restricted to public schools; 33 percent opposed this third system.

It is unclear why so many people had no opinion on these questions. One explanation is that "no opinion" was an explicit response category read over the telephone during the survey; in a sense, those with doubts were invited to be open about them. Another explanation is the limited public debate on vouchers until recently; very little was said in the period before the survey was taken. Lack of knowledge about vouchers may be best indicated by the first, and most general, of these questions which had the highest rate of no opinion--37 percent. Perhaps later opinions were triggered by key phrases like "limited to public schools" and "limited to low income parents."

Subgroups did not differ much in their favoring of these proposals, but opposition did vary by subgroup (because of differentials in no opinions). People who opposed the vouchers differed from the general sample in several ways. They tended to be male, older, live outside the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, have higher incomes, and/or be in an occupation other than service. Catholics (44 percent and 44 percent) and those with children in private schools (66 percent and 57 percent) most favored the two alternatives not limited to public schools.

THE QUESTIONS

A2. In your opinion, what do you think are two or three of the most important issues facing people in Minnesota today?

	Number of Responses	Percent of the 1,827 Responding to this Question
Taxes	1194	65.4
Unemployment	562	30.8
Education	307	16.8
Business climate	231	12.6
Environment	222	12.2
Economy	179	9.8
Government	132	7.2
Winter	89	4.9
Inflation	76	4.2
War	62	3.4
Energy	60	3.3
Farming	60	3.3
Minority welfare	51	2.8
Health care	49	2.7
Transportation	49	2.7
Housing	41	2.2
Crime	36	2.0
Gambling	31	1.7
Abortion	24	1.3
Other	295	16.1
TOTAL	3750	205%

For those mentioning education:

AGE: Those in their 30s and 40s had the highest rates of mentioning education (25 and 19 percent).

INCOME: There was an upward trend in the mention of education as income went up (11.4 percent for less than $10,000 to 24 percent for $40-50,000); and a slight drop for more than $50,000 (20 percent).

EDUCATION: A strong upward trend appeared in the mention of education as the amount of education increased: from 9 percent (non-high school graduates) to 32 percent (advanced degrees).

RELIGION: No difference was shown among groups.

OCCUPATION: Managers and professionals had the highest mention of education (23 percent), those in service the lowest (9 percent).

SEX: Females mentioned education 21 percent of the time; males, 13 percent of the time.

* **HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION:** Married people with children had the highest mention of education (23 percent); single parents' the lowest (9 percent).

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: Those with children in school mentioned education more often (24 percent) than those without children in school (12 percent).

TWIN CITIES: People living in the metropolitan suburbs had the highest mention of education (19 percent); Minneapolis, the lowest (13 percent).

REGION: No large differences were apparent among regions.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: Very small districts (less than 500) and large districts (more than 5,000) had 20 percent mentioning education; small districts (500-1,000) had 10 percent mentioning it.

GRADUATING CLASS: Districts with very small classes (less than 30) and with very large classes (more than 500) had 25 percent mentioning education; those rated small (30-60) had the lowest (11 percent) response rate.

B1. In general, how would you rate Minnesota public schools... excellent, good, fair, or poor?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	455	23.8	23.8
Good	1053	55.2	79.0
Fair	315	16.5	95.5
Poor	85	4.5	100.0
Don't know	93	--	
Refused to answer	2	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

Summary: 79.0 percent rated schools good or excellent, 21.0 percent rated them fair or poor.

AGE: Respondents in their 20s had the most fair/poor responses (27 percent); older ages were mostly homogenous.

INCOME: Good/excellent responses increased with income, from 75 percent ($10,000 or under) to 85 percent (over $50,000).

EDUCATION: People with college and advanced degrees chose excellent 32 percent of the time, non-college grads, about 22 percent.

RELIGION: For those with religious beliefs, 80 percent gave a good/excellent rating, while 62 percent with no religious beliefs did so.

OCCUPATION: Managers and professionals, and those in technical and farm/forest occupations chose good/excellent at a rate of about 80 percent; others, about 70 percent.

SEX: No differences appeared between sexes.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: 73 percent of singles rated schools good/excellent; 82 percent of married people gave the same rating.

* **CHILDREN IN SCHOOL:** Parents with children in private school had the largest fair/poor rating (41 percent); those who have never had school children had a fair/poor rating of 26 percent.

* **TWIN CITIES:** Minneapolis/St. Paul respondents were 60 percent good/excellent; the rest of the state were 82 percent good/excellent.

REGION: Northwest and southeast had the most good/excellent responses (87 percent and 86 percent); the metro area had the lowest (75 percent).

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: No clear differences appeared among groups.

GRADUATING CLASS: Those in districts with medium size graduating classes (300-399) had the highest fair/poor rating (28 percent).

B2. Is the quality of Minnesota public schools better, the same, or worse than it was ten years ago?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Better	729	43.2	43.2
Same	435	25.8	69.0
Worse	522	31.0	100.0
Don't know	233	--	
Refused to answer	3	--	
Not here ten years ago	81	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

AGE: Those in their 20s and 40s had a 49 percent rating of better; those over fifty had 38 percent.

INCOME: Those that said worse increased with income, from 28 percent (under $10,000) to 37 percent (over $50,000).

EDUCATION: The better rating dropped from 45 percent for those with no college to 34 percent for those with advanced degrees.

RELIGION: Protestants chose the better rating 41 percent of the time and Catholics, 47 percent of the time.

OCCUPATION: No substantive differences appeared among groups.

SEX: No differences between sexes were apparent.

* **HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION:** Single parents had the highest better response (57 percent); married with no children had the lowest (37 percent).

* **CHILDREN IN SCHOOL:** Parents with children in public school had the highest better rating (52 percent); parents with private school children only had the lowest better rating (23 percent).

* **TWIN CITIES:** Minneapolis had the lowest better rating (29 percent); the metropolitan suburbs and outstate Minnesota had the highest better rating (45 percent).

REGION: No differences appeared among groups.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: No large differences were apparent.

GRADUATING CLASS: No substantive differences could be seen.

There are a number of proposals for reforming public schools. I'd like to know which ones you think should be adopted in Minnesota.

B3. Making it easier to replace teachers doing unsatisfactory work by modifying teacher tenure... should this be adopted in Minnesota, or not?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	1548	83.1	83.1
No	269	14.4	97.5
Depends	46	2.5	100.0
Don't know	128	--	
Refused to answer	12	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

AGE: A slight upward trend in yes responses appeared with age, from 81 percent (20s) to 85 percent (50s, 60s, 70s).

INCOME: People with $40-50,000 incomes gave the lowest (75 percent) yes responses; people with over $50,000 incomes gave the highest (90 percent) yes responses.

* **EDUCATION:** Those with graduate degrees had the lowest yes responses (70 percent).

RELIGION: No differences appeared among groups.

OCCUPATION: People in farm/forest occupations had the highest proportion of yes responses (88 percent); managers and professionals, and operatives had the lowest (80 percent).

SEX: No differences were noted between sexes.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: No substantive differences were apparent.

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: No substantial differences showed among groups.

TWIN CITIES: Minneapolis/St. Paul residents had 78 percent yes responses, while others had 84 percent.

REGION: There were no substantive differences.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: Yes responses went downward as district size increased: under 500, 87 percent yes, to more than 10,000 81 percent yes.

GRADUATING CLASS: A slight downward approval trend appeared with increasing size, from 85 percent (less than 300) to 82 percent (more than 500).

B4. Allowing school districts to hire and lay off teachers without regard to seniority... should this be adopted in Minnesota, or not?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	690	35.9	35.9
No	1076	56.0	91.9
Depends	155	8.1	100.0
Don't know	69	--	
Refused to answer	1	--	
TOTAL	2001	100%	

AGE: Persons older than 70 had the lowest proportion of yes responses (28 percent); otherwise, there was a slight upward trend with age from 33 percent (20s) to 40 percent (60s).

* **INCOME:** The highest proportion of yes responses (49 percent) came from those with high income (more than $50,000).

EDUCATION: An upward trend in the number of yes responses was apparent, from non-high school graduates (29 percent) to those with college experience (38 percent).

RELIGION: No substantial differences emerged among groups.

* **OCCUPATION:** Those with farm/forest occupations had the highest approval rating (53 percent); operatives, the lowest (29 percent).

SEX: No differences were shown between sexes.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: Singles had a lower number of yes responses (32 percent) than married persons (37 percent).

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: No substantial differences appeared.

TWIN CITIES: Those outside the central cities had a higher approval rate (38 percent) than those in the central cities (20 percent in St. Paul, 30 percent in Minneapolis).

REGION: Northeast and the metropolitan area approved the least (30 and 33 percent); southeast had the highest approval (43 percent).

* **SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE:** A general downward trend in yes responses showed up as school district size increased, from 51 percent yes (less than 500) to 28 percent yes (more than 10,000).

GRADUATING CLASS: Again, a downward approval trend appeared in yes responses as the size of high school graduating classes increased, from 43 percent (less than 200) to 33 percent (more than 500).

B5. Significantly increasing teacher salaries... should this be adopted in Minnesota, or not?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	914	49.3	49.3
No	938	50.7	100.0
Don't know	144	--	
Refused to answer	7	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

AGE: The number of persons answering yes decreased with age, from 55 percent (20s and 30s) to 41 percent (60s and 70s).

INCOME: The highest approval rating came from the $30-40,000 group (61 percent); otherwise, higher income groups were more approving (54 percent for $40,000 or greater) than lower income groups (45 percent for less than $10,000).

* **EDUCATION:** A distinct upward trend appeared in the proportion of yes responses as education increased, from 39 percent (non-high school graduates) to 67 percent (advanced degree).

RELIGION: Both Catholics and those with no religion had a 53 percent yes response.

OCCUPATION: People in farm/forest occupations had the lowest approval (33 percent), managers and professionals the highest (56 percent).

SEX: No difference was apparent between sexes.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: Single parents had the highest proportion of yes responses (60 percent); married people with no children had the lowest (45 percent).

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: Those with no children ever and those with children in private school had the highest approval (57 percent); those with children too old for school, the lowest (43 percent).

* **TWIN CITIES:** Outstate people had the lowest yes rating (41 percent); Minneapolis, the highest (64 percent).

REGION: Highest approval came from people in the metropolitan area (58 percent); lowest, from those in the southwest (36 percent).

* **SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE:** An upward trend was evident in yes responses as the size of the district increased, from 31 percent (less than 500) to 59 percent (more than 10,000).

* **GRADUATING CLASS:** Again, a general upward trend appeared in approval as the class size increased, from 35 percent (less than 100) to 56 percent (more than 500).

B6. Paying the cost of public education entirely from state taxes... should this be adopted in Minnesota, or not?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	543	30.0	30.0
No	1193	66.0	96.1+
Depends	71	3.9	100.0
Don't know	181	--	
Refused to answer	15	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

+Computed from cumulated responses, not summed from "valid percent."

AGE: Persons over 70 had a slightly higher proportion of yes responses (35 percent) than other groups; those in their 40s, a slightly lower proportion (27 percent).

* **INCOME:** Yes responses declined as income increased, from 34 percent (less than $10,000) to 19 percent (more than $50,000), with the exception of $40-50,000 (33 percent).

EDUCATION: Non-high school graduates gave the highest approval (36 percent); college graduates and those with graduate degrees, the lowest (24 percent).

RELIGION: No differences appeared among groups.

OCCUPATION: Managers and professionals had a lower approval rate (24 percent) than other groups.

SEX: Males approved 34 percent of the time; females 26 percent.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: People married and with children had the lowest approval rate (26 percent), those married but without children, the highest (33 percent).

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: Parents with children too young for school or with children in public school approved the least (27 percent); those with children in private school approved the most (37 percent).

TWIN CITIES: No differences appeared among these locations.

* **REGION:** Northeast had the highest proportion of yes responses (38 percent); northwest and southwest had the lowest (22 percent).

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: A slight increase in approval was apparent with increased size: less than 1,000, 26 percent yes; more than 1,000, 31 percent yes.

GRADUATING CLASS: No clear pattern appeared.

There are several ways to insure that children in all Minnesota public schools receive equal educational opportunities. Tell me whether you favor or oppose each one.

B7. Providing more state aid to school districts with less ability to fund their own educational programs... do you favor or oppose this?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Favor	1571	82.3	82.3
Oppose	337	17.7	100.0
Don't know	85	--	
Refused to answer	10	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

AGE: People in their 20s favored t[illegible] most (88 percent); those in their 50s, the least (72 percent). Approval decre[illegible]ed with age.

INCOME: No substantive differences appeared.

EDUCATION: Approval went up as education level went up, from 77 percent approval (non-high school graduates) to 88 percent (advanced graduates).

RELIGION: There were no substantial differences among groups.

* **OCCUPATION:** Those in farm/forest occupations had a much lower favor rating (65 percent) than the other groups.

SEX: No differences were apparent between sexes.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: Single parents had the highest rate of approval (93 percent); married persons with no children had the lowest (77 percent).

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: Those with no children favored this proposal the most (87 percent); those with children too old for school favored it the least (76 percent).

TWIN CITIES: People in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area approved at an 87 percent rate, the rest of the state approved at an 81 percent rate.

* **REGION:** People in the southwest had a lower favor rating (70 percent) than other regions; people in southeast and the metro area had the highest ratings (84 and 85 percent, respectively).

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: Districts with small numbers of students (less than 500) had the lowest favor rating (74 percent); no others stood out.

GRADUATING CLASS: No substantive differences were evident.

B8. Restricting the spending level of wealthier school districts so their programs remain similar to those in poorer school districts... do you favor or oppose this?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Favor	1022	53.5	53.5
Oppose	888	46.5	100.0
Don't know	81	--	
Refused to answer	12	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

AGE: The youngest people (20s), and the oldest (over 60), gave the highest approval (57 percent and 64 percent); people in their 30s (44 percent) gave the lowest approval.

* **INCOME:** There was a distinct downward trend in approval as income increased, from 65 percent (less than $10,000) to 37 percent (more than $50,000).

* **EDUCATION:** Again, a distinct downward trend in approval appeared as education increased, from 68 percent (non-high school graduates), to 22 percent (advanced degree graduates).

RELIGION: Those with religious beliefs had 53 percent favorable responses, while those with no religious beliefs had 46 percent favorable responses.

* **OCCUPATION:** Managers and professionals had a much lower approval rating (36 percent) than other occupations.

SEX: Males were 48 percent in favor, females 58 percent.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: Married persons with kids had a lower approval rating (47 percent) than others.

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: Those with children in school had lower approval ratings (public school, 48 percent; private school, 42 percent) than those without children in school (children too old for school, 60 percent).

TWIN CITIES: Minneapolis had the lowest approval rating (41 percent); St. Paul and outstate had the highest (58 percent).

REGION: People in the northeast favored this proposal the most (64 percent); people in the metropolitan area favored it the least (49 percent).

* **SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE:** A general downward trend appeared in approval as district size increased, from 66 percent favor (less than 500) to 46 percent favor (5,000-9,999).

* **GRADUATING CLASS:** Again, a downward trend in approval was shown as class size increased, from 63 percent approval (size less than 60) to 44 percent approval (size more than 500).

B9. Requiring that all public schools in Minnesota teach similar classes and use similar materials... do you favor or oppose this?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Favor	1461	75.8	75.8
Oppose	467	24.2	100.0
Don't know	67	--	
Refused to answer	8	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

AGE: Those over 60 had the highest favor ratings (85 percent).

* **INCOME:** A downward trend in approval was clear as income increased, from 84 percent (less than $10,000) to 59 percent (more than $50,000).

* **EDUCATION:** Approval also decreased as education increased, from 90 percent (non-high school graduates) to 44 percent (those with advanced degrees).

RELIGION: No differences appeared among groups.

OCCUPATION: Operatives and people in service, crafts, and repair favored the proposal at a rate of 82 percent, managers and professionals at 61 percent.

SEX: The favor rate for males was 72 percent, for females, 79 percent.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: Eighty percent of married people with no children favored the proposal while 72 percent of singles with no children favored it.

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: Parents with children too old for school had the highest proportion of those favoring (81 percent); those with no children ever had the lowest proportion (70 percent).

TWIN CITIES: People living in Minneapolis favored the proposal 66 percent of the time; those in St. Paul and outstate had the highest favor rate at 79 percent.

REGION: Metro residents had the lowest approval (72 percent); northeast residents had the highest (84 percent).

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: Approval decreased as district size increased, from a high of 83 percent favoring for districts with 500-1,000 students to 72 percent for districts over 10,000.

GRADUATING CLASS: Again, approval decreased as size increased, from 80 percent (less than 200) to 68 percent (more than 500).

B10. In recent years the state has shifted some of its responsibility to local school districts, shifting from reliance on state taxes to local property taxes for funding education... do you agree or disagree with this policy?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	829	45.6	45.6
Disagree	989	54.4	100.0
Don't know	174	--	
Refused to answer	11	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

AGE: People in their 60s and 70s agreed the least (36 percent); those in their 20s and 50s agreed the most (51 percent).

* **INCOME:** A distinct trend emerged: as incomes improved, so did agreement, from 39 percent (less than $10,000) to 58 percent (more than $50,000).

EDUCATION: Non-high school graduates had the lowest agreement (37 percent); those with college but no advanced degrees had the highest (52 percent).

RELIGION: Forty-nine percent of Protestants agreed, while 38 percent with no religion agreed.

* **OCCUPATION:** Managers and professionals agreed the most (51 percent); those in farm/forest occupations agreed the least (33 percent).

SEX: No differences appeared between sexes.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: There were no substantive differences among groups.

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: No substantial differences emerged here either.

TWIN CITIES: Residents of Minneapolis had the lowest agreement (35 percent); residents of the metro suburbs and outstate had the highest (47 percent).

* **REGION:** Northeast had the lowest agreement rating (39 percent); northwest, the highest (54 percent).

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: No clear trends appeared.

GRADUATING CLASS: A slight increase of agreement as size increased, from 40 percent (fewer than 30) to 47 percent (more than 400); also, the 200-300 class size had a 51 percent approval.

B12. Right now, Minnesota gives aid to private schools through tuition tax credits and other programs. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with this policy?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	240	12.6	12.6
Agree	958	50.4	63.0
Disagree	526	27.7	90.6+
Strongly disagree	178	9.4	100.0
Don't know	92	--	
Refused to answer	9	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

+Computed from cumulated responses, not summed from "valid percent."

KEY: In the text below, agreement refers to the two agreement categories, similarly for disagreement. Summary: 63 percent agreement, 37 percent disagreement.

AGE: People in their 20s agreed the most (66 percent); those in their 70s, the least (55 percent).

INCOME: People more strongly disagreed as their income went up, from 6 percent (less than $10,000) to 16 percent (more than $50,000).

EDUCATION: Increasing trends appeared in both strong agreement and strong disagreement as education increased, from 7.6 and 8.9 percent, respectively (non-high school graduates), to 18 and 24 percent, respectively (those with advanced graduate education).

* **RELIGION:** Seventy-six percent of Catholics agreed with this policy, as opposed to 56 percent of Protestants.

OCCUPATION: Managers and professionals had both the highest percentage of strong agreement (17 percent) and of strong disagreement (13 percent).

SEX: No differences appeared between sexes.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: More single parents agreed (75 percent) than other groups.

* **CHILDREN IN SCHOOL:** Parents of private school children had much higher agreement (93 percent) than other groups.

TWIN CITIES: Residents of the central cities had higher strong agreement (18 percent) than other groups.

REGION: Northeast had a lower agreement rate (54 percent) than other regions.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: Those in districts with enrollments of 500-1,000 had higher agreement than others (67 percent).

GRADUATING CLASS: Those in districts with class sizes of 60-100 had higher agreement (70 percent) than others.

C1. In some nations, the government allots a certain amount of money for each student's education. The parents can then send the child to any public, parochial, or private school they choose. This is called the 'voucher system.' Would you favor or oppose such a program in Minnesota, or do you have no opinion?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Favor	681	34.5	34.5
Oppose	568	28.7	63.2
No opinion	727	36.8	100.0
Don't know	23	--	
Refused to answer	4	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

AGE: Forty-two percent of people in their 20s and 30s favored the proposal; 26 percent of those in their 50s and 60s favored it.

INCOME: Favoring the program decreased as income increased; 36 percent of those with income under $40,000 favored it, while 29 percent of those with income over $50,000 did.

* **EDUCATION:** A general upward trend appeared in opposition as education increased, from 22 percent (non-high school graduates) to 43 percent (those with advanced degrees).

* **RELIGION:** Forty-four percent of Catholics favored the program compared with 28 percent of Protestants.

OCCUPATION: Thirty-nine percent of the managers and professionals group opposed the program, while 19 percent of service workers opposed it.

SEX: Fewer females opposed the program (25 percent) than did males (33 percent).

* **HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION:** Fifty-one percent of single parents favored the program.

* **CHILDREN IN SCHOOL:** Those with children in private schools had 66 percent favoring the measure.

TWIN CITIES: Minneapolis and St. Paul had 44 percent favoring the proposal, the rest of the state had 33 percent.

REGION: Thirty-nine percent of people in the metro area favored the program; 27 percent of those in the northwest and southeast favored it.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: Very small districts (less than 500) had 20 percent favoring the measure; large districts (more than 3,000) had 36 percent favoring it.

GRADUATING CLASS: Favoring the program increased as size increased, from 16 percent favoring (less than 30 students) to 40 percent favoring (300-400 students); the percentage favoring drops off to 32 percent for very large schools (more than 500 students).

C2. One possible Minnesota voucher system would be limited to public schools. Parents could select any public school, even if they lived outside that school district. Would you favor or oppose such a program, or do you have no opinion?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Favor	697	35.4	35.4
Oppose	882	44.8	80.2
No opinion	391	19.8	100.0
Don't know	29	--	
Refused to answer	4	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

* **AGE:** Those favoring the program decreased as age increased, from 50 percent (20s) to 25 percent (60s and 70s).

* **INCOME:** Opposition increased as income increased, from 38 percent (less than $10,000) to 57 percent (more than $50,000).

* **EDUCATION:** Opposition also increased as education increased, from 39 percent (non-high school graduates) to 61 percent (those with advanced degrees).

RELIGION: Fifty-four percent of those with no religion favored the program.

OCCUPATION: Fifty-two percent of managers and professionals opposed the measure; 34 percent of service workers opposed it.

SEX: Fifty-one percent of males opposed the measure, 40 percent of females.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: Fifty-three percent of single parents favored the program, 27 percent of married persons with no children.

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: Those with no children ever opposed the measure at a rate of 35 percent; those with children in public school, at a rate of 51 percent.

TWIN CITIES: Thirty-four percent of people living in Minneapolis opposed the program; 50 percent of those in the metro suburbs opposed it.

REGION: Forty percent of those in the northeast favored the proposal, while 26 percent of those in the northwest favored it.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: Very small districts (less than 50) were more opposed (54 percent) than other groups.

GRADUATING CLASS: Districts with very small (less than 50) and very large (more than 500) graduating classes were more opposed (52 percent) than other districts.

C3. Another proposal would be limited to low income parents, but they could select a public or private school only if it met specific state standards. Would you favor or oppose such a program, or do you have no opinion?

	Number of Responses	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Favor	750	38.2	38.2
Oppose	654	33.3	71.5
No opinion	559	28.5	100.0
Don't know	35	--	
Refused to answer	5	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

AGE: Those in their 20s favored the proposal the most (47 percent); those 50 or older had 33 percent favoring it.

* **INCOME:** Opposition increased as income increased, from 21 percent (less than $10,000) to 44 percent (more than $50,000).

* **EDUCATION:** Opposition also increased as education increased, from 21 percent (non-high school graduates) to 49 percent (those with advanced degrees).

RELIGION: Forty-four percent of Catholics and those with no religion favored the proposal; 34 percent of Protestants favored it.

OCCUPATION: Forty-three percent of the managers and professionals opposed the measure, while 25 percent of the service people did.

SEX: Thirty-seven percent of males opposed the program while 30 percent of females opposed it.

* **HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION:** Single parents favored this the most (55 percent); married persons with no children favored it the least (33 percent).

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL: Fifty-seven percent of those with children in private school favored the measure; those with children too old for school or with children in public school had a 33 percent favor rating.

TWIN CITIES: Forty-eight percent of the Minneapolis/St. Paul area favored the proposal, 36 percent of the other groups favored it.

REGION: Northwest had 55 percent opposing the measure, southeast had 25 percent.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE: No substantial differences appeared among groups.

GRADUATING CLASS: There were no substantial differences among groups.

APPENDIX A - STRATIFICATIONS USED FOR EACH DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE

NOTE: Response patterns for a survey sample of this size should be within a range of ±5 percent of the state's true values. The reader may compare, for each variable, the "valid percent" with the 1980 Census percent to see how valid the survey sample was as a representation of the state's population as a whole.

AGE

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	1980 Census (Percent)
20s	492	24.9	27.5
30s	423	21.4	20.5
40s	345	17.4	14.2
50s	291	14.7	14.0
60s	233	11.8	11.6
70s and up	195	9.9	12.1
Missing	24	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

INCOME (HOUSEHOLD)

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	1980 Census (Percent)
$10,000 or under	371	20.6	27.0
$10-20,000	390	21.6	29.1
$20-30,000	470	26.0	22*
$30-40,000	283	15.7	12*
$40-50,000	140	7.8	6*
$50,000 and up	151	8.4	4.4
Missing	198	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

*$20-50,000 range was not broken in $10,000 increments in the Bureau of the Census reports. Numbers are rough approximates for these incomes. Totals for this range are 49.5 percent (survey) and 39.5 percent (census).

EDUCATION (HIGHEST DEGREE)

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	1980 Census (Percent)
Non-high school graduate	271	13.7	26.9
High school graduate	915	46.3	38.6
Some or two-year college	399	20.2	17.1
B.A.	296	15.0	10.0
Graduate degree	95	4.8	7.4
Missing	27	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

RELIGION

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	No Census Data Available
Protestant	1088	54.9	
Catholic	681	34.3	
Other	96	4.8	
None	119	6.0	
Missing	19	--	
	2003	100%	

OCCUPATION (MAJOR 1980 CENSUS CATEGORIES)

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	1980 Census* (Percent)
Managers and professionals ("Manager and Professional Specialty," e.g., legislators, accountants, engineers, teachers)	485	25.6	23.0
Technical ("Technical, Sales and Administrative Support," e.g., electronic technicians, salespersons, secretaries)	646	34.1	30.1
Farm and forest ("Farming, Forestry and Fishing," e.g., farmers, loggers, groundskeepers)	273	14.4	14.0
Service (e.g., waiters and waitresses, police and firefighters, barbers and hairdressers)	91	4.8	5.8
Crafts and repair ("Precision, Production, Craft and Repair," e.g. mechanics, carpenters, butchers)	174	9.2	11.3
Operators and laborers ("Operators, Fabricators and Laborers," e.g. printers, assemblers, truck drivers, laborers)	223	11.8	15.9
Missing	111	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

*Survey includes occupations for anyone who ever worked; census data is only for current workers.

SEX

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	1980 Census (Percent)
Male	903	45.1	48.1
Female	1100	54.9	51.9
TOTAL	2003	100%	

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	1980 Census (Percent)
Married, no children	661	33.0	28.8
Married, with children	726	36.3	33.9
Single parent	136	6.8	5.3
Single, no children	478	23.9	32.0
Missing	2	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	No Census Data Available
No children [illegible]	519	26.1	
Children too old for school	632	31.8	
Children too young for school	194	9.8	
Children in public school now	542	27.2	
Children in private school now	79	4.0	
Children in both public and private school now	23	1.2	
Missing	14	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

TWIN CITIES (AND THE REST OF THE STATE)

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	1980 Census (Percent)
Minneapolis	136	7.0	9.1
St. Paul	107	5.5	6.6
Other metro	711	36.7	33.0
Outstate	983	50.7	51.3
Missing	66	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

REGION (OF THE STATE)

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	1980 Census (Percent)
Northwest	73	3.7	3.8
Northeast	169	8.5	8.4
Central	399	20.0	20.2
Southwest	158	7.9	8.8
Southeast	198	9.9	9.9
Metro	1001	50.1	48.8
Missing	5	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	No Census Data Available
Under 500 students	108	5.6	
500-999 students	191	9.9	
1,000-2,999 students	421	21.8	
3,000-4,999 students	305	15.8	
5,000-9,999 students	366	19.0	
10,000 or more students	542	28.0	
Missing	70	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

GRADUATING CLASS (SIZE FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL)

(Averaged for districts with multiple high schools)

	Absolute Number	Valid Percent	No Census Data Available
Under 29 students	50	2.6	
30-59 students	158	8.2	
60-99 students	168	8.7	
100-199 students	249	12.9	
200-299 students	213	11.0	
300-399 students	545	28.2	
400-499 students	229	11.8	
500 or more students	322	16.6	
Missing	69	--	
TOTAL	2003	100%	

APPENDIX B - RESULTS OF THE CHI-SQUARE TEST FOR EACH VARIABLE

NOTE: Chi-square, X^2, was computed for each combination of survey question and demographic (explanatory) variable. Each test involved the full range of possible non-missing responses on both the survey question and the demographic variable; no collapsing was allowed. Because of this, and because chi-square does not test for ordinal trends, the level of statistical significance indicated in this table will not match well with relationships highlighted in the text.

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SUB-GROUP RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH SURVEY QUESTION BASED ON THE X^2 TEST

	A2	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B12	C1	C2	C3
Age	**	*	*		**	**	*	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Income	**				*	**			**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Education	**	**		*		**	*	*	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Religion		**				*				*	*	**	**	**	**
Occupation	**	**			**	**	*	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Sex	**				**		**		**	**			**	**	**
Household comp.	**	**	**		**	**		**	**	*		**	**	**	**
Children in school	**	**	**			**		**	**	**		**	**	**	**
Twin Cities		**	*	*	**	**		*	**	**		**	**	**	
Region		**		*	*	**		**	**	**			*	**	**
School district size	**	**		*	**	**		*	**	*		**			
Graduating class	**	**		*	**	**		*	**	**		**	*	*	*

blank : not statistically significant ($p > .05$)

* : statistically significant ($.05 > p > .01$)

** : strong statistical significance ($p > .01$)

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